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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 7234
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RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 3305
RUEHAE/AMEMBASSY ASMARA 2080
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 0112
RUEHKH/AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM 0084
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0589
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 2937
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0835
RUEHYN/AMEMBASSY SANAA 1516
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 DJIBOUTI 000614

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SUBJECT: UPDATE 2: AVIAN INFLUENZA IN DJIBOUTI

REF: DJIBOUTI 564

DJIBOUTI 578

¶1. (U) Summary. Since our last update, very little new information has been confirmed. In reftel we referred to a confirmed case in an eight-year-old child. Since then we have learned that the child in question was only two-years-old. She has since recovered nicely. We believe she may be one of the young survivors of H5N1 to recover without Tamiflu being administered within the first 48 hours of symptom onset. Two of her siblings and her health-care provider have fallen ill and samples from the three individuals were sent to NAMRU-3 in Cairo for testing, as well as a sick chicken that the family owned. All returned negative. It is still not clear how the two-year-old girl became infected. The Government of Djibouti (GoD) was offering daily briefings to the Ministry of Health. These briefings have been canceled until further notice because of the lack of results in carrying out activities that are planned for these meetings, in particular the culling of chickens in the capital. Summary.

What Djibouti is doing:

¶2. (U) When H5N1 was confirmed in a person in Damerjog, the GoD announced that all chickens in the Damerjog area should be culled and that bird owners would be recompensed for their loss. The GoD sent representatives to Damerjog, to initiate the culling, but when the birds were presented for culling, the compensation would be given at a later (undetermined) date. Most bird owners took their chickens and left the area. The GoD has been trying to cull chickens in Damerjog but no official reports have been received with details of results.

¶3. (U) Comment. This policy has the potential to bring together infected and uninfected birds in one area, as upon finding they will not be paid, they return them to their homes, possibly having cross-contaminated previous healthy birds. However, the 26 samples that were collected for testing all tested negative. Tests performed locally in the French Military hospital and official tests will come from NAMRU-3.

¶4. (U) At the urging of USAID, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the French military the Ministry of Agriculture announced through a communiqué on May 21 that it would soon begin culling operations in the capital, with full cooperation of the population in order to succeed. The communiqué provides details such as date or methodology for carrying out this operation.

What the French are doing:

¶5. (U) The French military hospital has the capability to test to identify both birds and people. The hospital does not have a level-3 approved laboratory, so samples with positive findings are sent to Cairo to be processed by NAMRU-3. The French also provided Tamiflu to Djiboutian health officials to administer to the three patients that had been awaiting treatment as well as the index case of the two year old.

¶6. (SBU) Reportedly the French military got fed up with the daily Djibouti briefing at the Ministry of Health after indications that the GoD was not attending and providing no new information. The French announced that they would attend no more meetings until the GoD or WHO had something to report. Meetings have therefore been suspended until further notice.

¶7. (U) ConOff also met with representatives from the French Consulate for information about the situation in Djibouti. The French representative was poorly informed, and hungry for reliable information. Comment: USAID representative has heard doubts expressed by the French that Avian Flu exists in Djibouti. End Comment.

What the U.S. is doing:

¶8. (U) USAID and Embassy representatives attended the daily briefings that were suspended. We continue to communicate one on one with our immediate counterparts in the French embassy/consulate and with local representatives. Also, USAID is working with WHO to develop the communication plan which WHO will execute. USAID will provide \$50,000 funding to WHO to support this activity which includes production of television/radio materials as well as dissemination of these materials. Support and general awareness-raising in the population. USAID is also providing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to GoD and US Military, distributed 50 sets thus far. Fifty more have arrived and another 200 way as well as two lab specimen kits and one decontamination kit. USAID/Washington has said that it could make available up to another

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\$100,000 as needed.

¶9. (SBU) The U.S. military sent several medical personnel to the area Damerjog to look for and sample sick people. However, they expected the Ministry of Agriculture to be sampling chickens. When it became clear the Ministry was not, the U.S. medical personnel attempted to locate chickens to test them. The military considered it essential to identify the source of the infected child's illness. If H5N1 cannot be traced to a chicken with which the girl had direct contact, new questions are raised. As yet, all fowl in that area have tested negative, and the source has not been definitively identified.

¶10. (U) On May 14 ConOff held a Warden Meeting. It was well attended, all but one Warden appearing. USAID rep for health issues presented what he knew about AI in Djibouti, as well as basic information about the virus to protect oneself. Information pamphlets were distributed. On May 14 Ambassador held a Town Hall meeting in which CJTF-HOA and USAID participated. This meeting was poorly attended by AmCits, but several ahead of time to inquire as to the content of the meeting, so we are confident the message got out through Wardens. Contact with several AmCits after the meeting confirmed that they were aware, but did not feel sufficient anxiety about H5N1 to warrant attending the meeting. However, the meeting was attended by several non-AmCits who wanted to know what information we had to share (specifically: the panel physician, a CDC representative and the French Consulate.)

¶11. (U) Embassy Djibouti will continue to transmit to Washington and American community information as it becomes available.
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